

GET SOCIAL

Find Opportunities Online



The rise of online social networking is a major complement to the science of online job hunting. There is a clear benefit to having your professional profile already accessible on social networking sites at the exact time you are posting your resume and other information on traditional job search sites such as Monster and WorkInTexas.com.

Try to keep employers' perspectives in mind. What are they doing to find the right employees? What tools, resources, shortcuts and tricks-of-the-trade are they using to fill essential job openings as quickly as possible?

SEARCH (AND THINK) LIKE EMPLOYERS

Learn to anticipate employers' search methods when they are trying to find good job candidates. If you were an employer and needed someone like you, how would you go about finding you – as a candidate?

Employers try all kinds of tactics, including joining and searching the same social networking sites as many job hunters do. Employers also have access to job candidate source databases such as Monster's SmartFind, Indeed and LinkedIn. Get familiar with these databases.

Additionally, some recruiters resort to a tactic called "x-raying" (searching deep within a competitor company's website for passive job candidates) and "flipping" (using a competitor's website to identify linked sites that also may be a source of passive job candidates). They search using keywords, job titles, location, education, etc. – just like you.

However, employers are sorting through hundreds of profiles and don't have time to read through all the "fluff." So, whenever you post professional information about yourself online, always make it short, simple and straight to the point.

For example, Twitter limits you to 140 characters per "tweet." So, if your purpose for having a Twitter account is to find employment, only "tweet" things that may draw potential employers to your profile and make them interested in what you are tweeting. Otherwise, they will breeze right past what you've written to pursue tweets that lead them to good candidates. Ultimately, employers will "unfollow" you if your tweets are often or always seem concerned with nonprofessional matters.

Spend some time learning the nuances of each site. One size does not fit all and you're the best judge of which sites are best for you.

Using social networking sites also means getting accustomed to certain informal nuances adopted by social networkers. For example, because Twitter provided no easy way to group tweets or add extra data, the Twitter community came up with hashtags. A hashtag is similar to other web tags – it helps add tweets to a category. Hashtags have the "hash" or "pound" symbol (#) preceding the tag, like so: #traffic, #followfriday, #hashtag.

Employers are always drawn to people who have things in common with them. So, don't forget your alma mater. On all job search and networking sites, there's obviously a chance of connecting with an employer when you offer information about the school(s) you attended and the year in which you graduated.

As you would on a resume, steer clear of anything that has the potential of turning off an employer. While social networking sites are made to help people learn more about others, be careful about aligning yourself to one political or religious affiliation, for instance. For every potential employer that affiliation attracts, it will probably deter another.